

Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 DRC-01 L-03 COME-00 /051 W

----- 051903

R 021330Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1866

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SGEN, SOCI, GR

SUBJECT: ATHOS COUNCIL VOTES TO SUPPORT PATRIARCHAL ORDER

REF: THESS 152 AND 155

1. THESSALONIKI PAPERS OF APRIL 2 REPORT DECISION PREVIOUS DAY BY HOLY COUNCIL OF ATHOS COMMUNITY SUPPORTING PATRIARCHAL ORDER FOR REMOVAL OF CERTAIN ABBOTS AND MONKS (REFS). REPS OF 19 MONASTERIES CONDEMNED "APOSTACY" OF ESFIGMENOU MONASTERY AS "BREACH OF BROTHERHOOD OF MT. ATHOS".

2. ACCORDING TO SPEC. CORRESPONDENT YANGIOSIS OF "ELLINIKOS VORRAS", ESFIGMENOU NOW CLOSED TO VISITORS, "BLOCKADED" ON ORDERS OF CIVILIAN GOVERNOR KREKOUKIAS, AND UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY GENDARMERIE AND HARBOR AUTHORITIES. AT XENOPHON, ABBOT EVTHOKIMOS STILL RESISTING DISMISSAL, BUT APPARENTLY UNDERMINED BY MONASTERY'S ACCEPTANCE OF PATRIARCHAL ORDER IN HOLY COUNCIL.

3. COMMENT: DECISION OF ATHOS COUNCIL TO UPHOLD PATRIARCH'S ORDER APPEARS TO RESOLVE BASIC ISSUE; HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTROVERSY LIKELY TO CONTINUE RE ROLE OF ESFIGMENOU.

BASIC ISSUE AT LATTER MONASTERY IS DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCE
OVER ORTHODOX CALENDAR. MAJORITY OF APPROX. 40 ESFIGMENOU
MONKS REFUSE TO ACCEPT 1923 MODIFICATION OF CALENDAR, THUS
IMPLICITLY CHALLENGING AUTHORITY OF PATRIARCH. LOCAL
ORTHODOX PRIESTS HAVE COMMENTED TO CONGEN THAT ATHOS COUNCIL
HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO ACCEPTING PATRIARCH'S ORDER,
WHICH PROBABLY CLEARED IN ADVANCE WITH MAJOR MONASTERIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, POLITICAL SITUATION, RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974THESSA00167
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740073-0634
From: THESSALONIKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740472/aaaacowm.tel
Line Count: 69
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: THESS 152 AND 155
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <31 JUL 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATHOS COUNCIL VOTES TO SUPPORT PATRIARCHAL ORDER
TAGS: PINT, SGEN, SOCI, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005